UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.198/1992/3
31 January 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION
Fourteenth session
30 March-16 April 1992

SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

Implementation of a system-wide information programme for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. In resolution 46/73 B of 11 December 1991, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session on the implementation of a system-wide information programme for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). This report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. A system-wide information programme for UNCED was proposed by the Department of Public Information (DPI) to the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) at its seventeenth session, held in June 1991. By this proposal, the "Core" information programme in paragraphs 17 and 18 of document A/C.5/44/54 was to be supplemented with additional inter-agency projects in support of UNCED.

"Core" information programme

3. The "core" information programme for UNCED was approved by the General Assembly as part of the overall budget for UNCED, and is currently being carried out by DPI, in cooperation with the UNCED Secretariat and in close coordination with agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. In addition, some information products are being funded totally from the regular DPI budget, or from that budget in combination with funds from the UNCED

information budget. The core programme, along with the outputs from DPI's regular programme, contains the elements listed below. A report on the status of each item is given.

(a) A basic informational brochure on UNCED has been issued in the six official languages and Portuguese. More than 100,000 copies have been distributed.

(b) Two issues of a Conference newsletter, Earth Summit News, were published and distributed by the UNCED Secretariat in English and French. A number of excellent newsletters about UNCED are being published by non-governmental organizations; therefore to avoid duplication, a decision was made by the UNCED secretariat to discontinue Earth Summit News and reallocate the remaining resources to other UNCED information programmes.

(c) A special edition of Notes for Speakers, a DPI publication which gives information on major issues in a style suitable for general audiences, was devoted solely to the issues of environment and development. English, French and Spanish editions were published. Discussions are being held concerning the production of an Arabic edition.

(d) A leaflet for primary school students on the issue of environment and development was produced in August 1991, in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

(e) DPI and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are providing support to the "Developing Stories" series being produced by the BBC and the Television Trust for the Environment, focusing on environment and development from a third world perspective. From this, DPI will obtain footage for use in United Nations in Action and a half-hour edited version packaged for United Nations distribution.

(f) DPI is working with World Television News, which will produce six short pieces, each on a major subject area of the Conference, to send to broadcasters as background for their UNCED coverage.

(g) DPI has provided support to North South Productions (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) for a series of films on environment and development for Channel 4. As part of this co-production arrangement, North South has produced an educational video and two promotional television spots, and will provide footage for additional use by the United Nations.

(h) A 15-minute educational video and teaching guide on environment and development, aimed at secondary school students, has been produced in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish as part of the DPI series, About the United Nations. This will be available in February 1992 as a sales item and for distribution to the United Nations information centres.

(i) An information kit, primarily for journalists attending UNCED, will be prepared in May 1992 in English, French and Portuguese, and, subject to funding, possibly in Spanish.

(j) A Conference poster, to be printed in all official languages and Portuguese, is being produced by DPI. It will receive wide distribution through United Nations information centres and other organizations of the United Nations system.

(k) A round table to brief journalists on the main issues of UNCED will be held in Rio de Janeiro immediately prior to the opening of the Conference. Funding will be provided for travel and per diem of selected journalists from developing countries who might otherwise be unable to participate.

(l) Provision has been made for travel and production costs of eight segments of United Nations in Action, the three-minute television feature which is shown worldwide on CNN's "World Report", and is also distributed by DPI to other outlets. In fact, more than eight segments have already been produced on UNCED topics, and several more will be done prior to the Conference.

(m) A series of 15- and 30-second television "spots" (public service announcements) are in production, with both brief substantive themes and celebrity statements in support of UNCED. These will be done in all official languages and in Portuguese.

(n) A series of 15-minute radio documentaries, focusing on the United Nations system and sustainable development, is being prepared. All script treatments have been completed, and a recording mission is being undertaken in January and February 1992, with support from the United Nations Development Programme field offices. The documentaries are expected to be released in April/May 1992, in numerous languages, for distribution through United Nations Radio.

(o) Funds are being made available to selected United Nations information centres for programming and special events tied to UNCED. In many cases, these programmes will include field work of various organizations in the system.

Additional inter-agency projects in support of UNCED

4. A number of additional projects have been or are being undertaken within the framework of JUNIC.

(a) UNCED logo

DPI worked with the UNCED secretariat jointly to develop the logo for UNCED. This has been shared with members of JUNIC, many of whom have incorporated the logo into their visual designs for UNCED-related products.

(b) United Nations system exhibit at UNCED

A major United Nations system exhibit is planned for Rio Centro, the venue of UNCED. If feasible, this will be adapted to a travelling exhibit format following the Conference, and will be shown in various locations

throughout the world. To date, 10 agencies and programmes have contributed to this exhibit, which is currently being designed.

(c) Feature articles - "Earth Summit In Focus"

Utilizing the format of DPI's United Nations Focus series, a series of four-page feature articles devoted to the subject-matter of UNCED is being written and widely distributed in English, French, Spanish and occasionally Portuguese. These give particular attention to the United Nations system's technical assistance activities for environmentally sustainable development, as well as the linkages between environment and development issues. Thus far 3 articles have been issued; 10 more are in editing or production and will be issued shortly.

(d) Source book for media

A media source book was proposed for distribution to journalists at UNCED. In addition to providing information on themes, issues and preparations for the Conference, it would provide a brief guide to the work of United Nations agencies and programmes in the area of sustainable development. The source book would be aimed at programmers/editors/writers who need substantive information for radio, television or print production or coverage. The source book would also give contact information for individuals in the United Nations system working on environment and development issues and would include details of other United Nations information products. It would thus be of continuing use to journalists after UNCED itself has ended.

Preparatory work for this project has been started by DPI; lists of United Nations contact people and media outlets are being compiled. Publication of the Source Book will depend upon financial support from the United Nations system.

(e) The Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)

NGLS is an inter-agency project supported by JUNIC members. UNCED information activities have been among the Service's major projects recently. It is publishing, on a regular basis, the E and D File, a newsletter for non-governmental organizations on UNCED issues. Among its other publications is Women and the Environment. NGLS is carrying out a series of in-depth briefings for non-governmental organizations at meetings of the UNCED Preparatory Committee.

(f) Development Forum

Development Forum, which is published by DPI for JUNIC, has featured a number of articles on UNCED. The current issue is a special edition containing extended coverage of the preparations for the Conference.

DPI coverage of UNCED

5. In addition to the programmes noted above, DPI has given extensive coverage, in its regular operations and periodic publications, to the preparations for UNCED. Coverage has been given, via press releases, radio and television, to meetings of the Preparatory Committee for UNCED and to related events, such as press conferences at Headquarters by Mr. Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of UNCED. Mr. Strong has also been featured on World Chronicle, the United Nation television interview programme. Articles on UNCED have appeared in the quarterly publication UN Chronicle.

6. DPI will have an extensive coverage and press servicing operation at UNCED. Press releases will be issued in English, French, Portuguese and, if funding is available, in Spanish. Extensive radio and television coverage of the proceedings will be made. Press briefings and conferences will be arranged. Press accreditation, photography, document distribution and NGO liaison will also be provided by the DPI team. These arrangements are being closely coordinated with agencies and programmes of the United Nations system which wish to be able to deal with the press during UNCED, and which will utilize information sent from the Conference by the DPI coverage staff.